

**White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation
Day 2 Breakout Session Compilation**

Topic: Infrastructure Projects: Collaborative Partnerships for Successful Outcomes

Session number: 39

Morning

Facilitators: Raphael Montalvo & W. Steve Lee

Location: 264 & 266

A. Major Repeated Themes Raised in the Discussion. *A grouping of ideas repeated with some frequency in the session and brought up again during the group summation process. Also includes diverging views and/or questions about the topic.*

- Change in paradigm – regional, contextual, ecosystem focused, includes environment from the beginning. Joint planning rather than in silos.
- Need for vision, shared purpose to initiate a collaborative effort
- Need for policy that enables
- Need for someone to play the convening role, bringing folks together
- Need for leadership, authority, ability to make decisions, rewards for risk (need to overcome risk aversion of agencies and agency leaders), champion
- Identify mutual benefit
- How to effectively involve stakeholders and reach out to the public
- Role of NGOs, letting NGOs and other stakeholders take the lead and the risk.
- Need for a shared information base, common understanding of current state of the science or facts.
- Communication – how do you find, communicate and engage with the stakeholders
- How do you effectively share of resources

B. National-level Practical Actions *that could be taken by the Federal government, national NGO's, and other national organizations. Diverging views and/or questions are also noted.*

Overarching – Need for a Paradigm Shift

- There is a need for a different approach that:
 - ✓ Is proactive, discussing opportunities and issues up-front;
 - ✓ Is driven by a vision; bolder, regional;
 - ✓ Not infrastructure first, but infrastructure and environment together
 - ✓ Produces multi-purpose projects – ones that address environment and infrastructure, and take advantage of resources associated with infrastructure projects for multiple purposes.
 - ✓ Culture change
 - ✓ Focus on future rather than blame for the past;
 - ✓ Recognize economic driver and economic value of conservation;
 - ✓ Creates a climate for collaboration and risk sharing.
 - ✓ Defines success in way that seeks to learn from failure.
 - ✓ Doesn't stop trying – ducks will never all be all in line.

Actions for Administration and Congress

This document represents the views of the individual participants and does not reflect group consensus.

- Clear administration statement of conservation as a national commitment from the President and Congress.
- Reflect incentives, actions, and outcomes that implement the new paradigm in the appropriations and reauthorizations.
- Allow longer project timelines that allow for collaboration.
- Provide direction to agencies that reflects the new paradigm.
- Provide incentives for agency to work across normal lines of authority.
- Provide clarity in the legislative directives to agencies.

Actions for Agencies

Direction

- Develop internal policies and direction to:
 - ✓ move decision-making authority to local agency offices;
 - ✓ provide incentives flexibility, collaboration and partnerships;
 - ✓ reward risk taking;
 - ✓ insulate risk takers;
 - ✓ reward based on outcomes.
- Recognize that collaboration takes time and money. Include time and dollars in budget and schedule. Change budget process to allow longer timelines, if necessary.

Training

- Cross cultural training between NGOs and government.
- Training regarding what is possible under current law.
- Assess internal agency competencies to collaborate, and train to remedy weaknesses.

Partnerships

- Work with NGOs, let them take lead and risk.
- Support and incentive local government actions and participation. Local governments often have more flexibility than federal agencies.

Other Specific Suggested Actions

- Continue collaboration throughout the life of the project, collaborate with stakeholders to evaluate. The project and therefore the collaboration never go away.
- Incentivize collaboration within current cost-sharing rules (ACOE).
- Ensure regulatory consistency over life of the project.
- Use regulatory negotiations.
- Use memoranda of agreement.
- Assess the impacts of proposed projects on stakeholders.

C. Particularly insightful quotes from participants that capture the essence of key points made during the group's discussion.

“Don’t stop trying – the ducks will never all be in a line.”

“We need cooperative conservation between the three branches of government.”

“Incorporate environment as part of infrastructure and build deliberately into our planning.”

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